AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A slider~~bearing surface~~ comprising:

a leading edge;

a trailing edge;

a bearing surface~~ level~~; and

~~a first recessed level recessed below the bearing surface level;~~

~~a second recessed level recessed below the first recessed level; and~~

a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider~~ bearing surface~~, the center split feature comprising:

a first center split surface~~level~~ that is substantially level with ~~at the same level as~~ the bearing surface ~~level~~;

a second center split surface~~level~~ disposed forward of the first center split surface~~level~~ that is ~~at the same level as the first~~ recessed from the bearing surface ~~level~~; and

a third center split surface~~level~~ disposed forward of the second center split surface~~level~~ and recessed from the second center split surface~~level~~;

wherein the first, second and third center split surfaces~~levels~~ form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the bearing surface flows over the third, second and first center split surfaces~~levels~~ respectively.

2. (Currently Amended) The slider ~~bearing surface~~ of claim 1 further comprising:

a cavity dam disposed proximate to the leading edge, the cavity dam having a media facing surface that is raised above the first recessed surface~~level~~; and

a subambient pressurization cavity disposed between the cavity dam and the center split feature.

3. (Currently Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 2 further comprising:

a first side rail disposed along a first side of the slider~~body~~;

a second side rail disposed along a second side of the slider~~body~~.

4. (Currently Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 3 wherein the first and second rails are continuous with the center split feature.

5. (Withdrawn and Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 2 wherein the first center split surface~~level~~ is connected to the cavity dam and the first center surface~~split level~~ surrounds the subambient pressurization cavity.

6. (Currently Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 2 wherein a portion of the subambient pressurization cavity includes the third center split surface~~level~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 1 wherein the first recessed surface~~level~~ is recessed between about .15 microns and about .3 microns.

8. (Currently Amended) The slider~~air bearing surface~~ of claim 1 wherein the second recessed surface~~level~~ is recessed between about 2 microns and about 5 microns.

9. (Currently Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 2 wherein the center split feature further includes:

a pair of arms extending from the center split feature towards the cavity dam, each arm coupled to a side edge of the center split feature;

wherein the pair of arms define side edges of the subambient pressurization cavity.

10. (Currently Amended) The slider~~bearing surface~~ of claim 9 wherein the pair of arms connect the center split feature with the cavity dam.

11. (Currently Amended) The sliderbearing surface of claim 10 wherein a top surface of the pair of arms is substantially level with at the second center split surfacefirst recessed level.

12. (Currently Amended) The sliderbearing surface of claim 10 wherein a top surface of the pair of arms is at the bearing surface level.

13. (Withdrawn and Amended) The sliderbearing surface of claim 9 further comprising:

a plurality of arms extending from the first center split featurelevel towards the cavity dam, the plurality of arms spaced apart from each other and arranged about the centroid; and

wherein the plurality of arms divide the second center split surfacelevel into a plurality of discrete areas.

14. (Withdrawn and Amended) The sliderbearing surface of claim 13 wherein the plurality of arms divide the third center split surfacelevel into a plurality of discrete areas.

15. (Currently Amended) A slider supporting a transducer comprising:

a slider body having a media opposing face with a leading edge and a trailing edge relative to a direction of rotation of a media surface;

a bearing surface disposed on the media opposing face, comprising:

a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider body, the center split feature comprising:

a first center split surfacelevel;

a second center split surfacelevel recessed from the first center split surfacelevel;

and

a third center split surfacelevel recessed from the second center

split surface~~level~~;

wherein the first, second and third center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that fluid flowing over the center split feature flows over the third, second and first center split surface~~levels~~ respectively.

16. (Original) The slider of claim 15 wherein the slider body further comprises:

a cavity dam proximate to the leading edge;

a first side rail disposed along a first side of the slider body;

a second side rail disposed along a second side of the slider body; and

a subambient pressurization cavity disposed between the cavity dam and the center split feature.

17. (Original) The slider of claim 16 wherein the slider body further comprises:

a second sub ambient pressurization cavity, the second subambient pressurization cavity following, in the direction of fluid flow, the center split feature.

18. (Original) The slider of claim 17 wherein the second sub ambient pressurization cavity is divided into two separate cavities by a center rail feature.

19. (Currently Amended) A bearing surface of a slider comprising:

a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider~~bearing~~ surface, the center split feature comprising at least three center split levels;~~,~~

a cavity dam disposed forward of the center split feature relative to a fluid flow; and

wherein the at least three center split levels form a step like pattern, and are disposed such that the fluid flowing over the bearing surface flows over each of the at least three center split levels respectively.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (New) The bearing surface of claim 19 wherein the center split feature further includes:

a pair of arms extending from the center split feature towards the cavity dam, each arm coupled to a side edge of the center split feature;

wherein the pair of arms define side edges of a subembient pressurization cavity.